

No te haré daño

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No te haré daño

by [Lunnaya Murka](#)

Summary

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- A translation of [No te haré daño](#) by [Lunnaya Murka](#)

Title: No te haré daño

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Genre: adventure, humor, romance, love/hate relationship

Category: Slash, het

Warning: Crossdressing, polyamory, Alternate Universe – Canon Divergence

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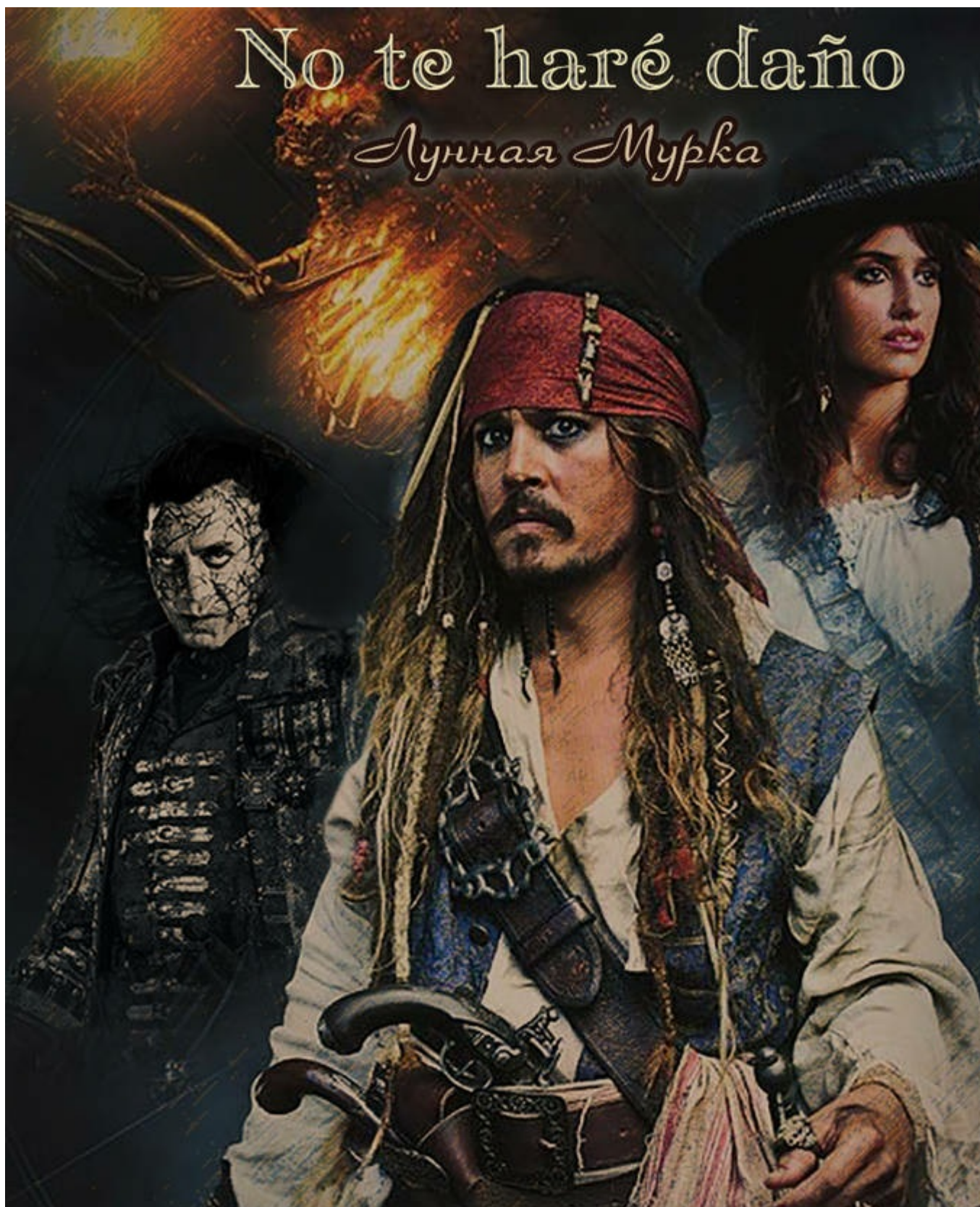
Explanation: AU about what would happen if in the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales* Captain Salazar grabbed and dragged with him from the board of the *Black Pearl* on board of the *Silent Mary* not Henry, but Jack.

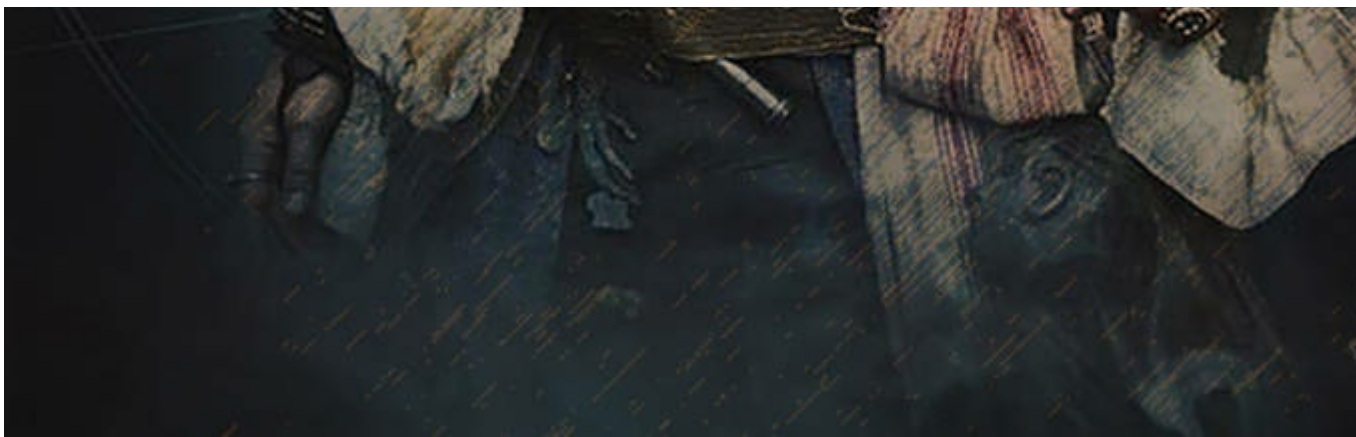
Author’s note: Muse and inspiration, filthy pirates that they are, just boarded Murka again. Murka tried to resist. Murka tried to fight them off. Murka tried to purr that she didn’t write sequels. But

Captain Salazar intervened, literally put a sword to my throat and asked: “Will you tail me to Jack Sparrow?”. And as soon as somebody tried to act like Barbossa and weasel out of the fulfilment of insistent requests, Captain Salazar said that he doesn’t want to know anything, I *will* write this fic, otherwise he will painfully and permanently torment my imagination, whisper in my ear, force me to reach for the keyboard... In general, yes. I had to give up. That’s how from blackmail and threats another thoroughly pirate fanfic was born.

You can see an illustration for this fanfic here: <http://lunnayamurka.deviantart.com/art/No-te-hare-dano-689797524>

This fanfic has a prequel: *Better find yourself a lass*. And Murka as an author strongly advises to read the first part of the story before starting to read the second.





No te haré daño

*Долгими ночами время кажется пустым,
Долгими ночами превращаю время в дым
Ты живёшь мечтами, но печальны глаза
Я должен сделать шаг, мне больше ждать нельзя*

Больше ждать уже нельзя

*Полетела душа через край напролёт,
Говорят, хороша царевна живёт
Над землёй не спеша мимо туч, мимо бед
Полетела душа за нею на свет*

*Ты меня не бойся, я не буря, я – прибой
Ты меня не бойся, я приехал за тобой
В каждом моём вдохе – твоё имя живёт
Я знаю, кто ты есть, я знаю, что нас ждёт*

Точно знаю, что нас ждёт

*Time seems empty on long nights,
On long nights the time turns into a wisp of smoke
You live in dreams, but your eyes are sad
I have to make a move, I can't wait no more*

Can't wait no more

*My soul flew after her, over the edge and over again,
They say that the tzarevna is gorgeous and fair.
Above the ground, slowly flying over the clouds, over troubles and grieves,
The soul flew after her to the light and the glim*

*Don't be afraid of me, I'm not a storm, I'm a breeze
Don't be afraid of me, I came to take you with me
In every breath I take – your name is on my lips
I know who you are, I know what awaits us*

I know exactly what awaits us

He spotted her immediately. Armando stopped for the night with the crew of the *Silent Mary* in a tavern that she entered, looking thoughtful and airy-fairy. She looked around misty-eyed and smiled with a light, gentle smile, as if her mind wasn't really there; wasn't in the ordinary noisy tavern, but somewhere far away, in some mysterious fairy-tale world.

She was alone. Such a beautiful girl – who allowed her to wander alone? Who let her go out without supervision? Who abandoned her? Who dared? Where are her servants, where is her duenna, where were the men from her family?

She walked between the chairs and tables, going straight to the owner of the tavern – perhaps she was looking for a place to stay for the night too, or was looking for someone who could have stayed here.

Armando stared at her, speechless. He watched her hips swaying attractively as she walked, marvelled at how gracefully her hands moved – they were flying like wings of an exotic bird. She was nothing like those stiff, cold, uptight statues of girls Captain Salazar had met before. She moved freely, easily; she fluttered – she wasn't trying to restrain her movements, no. She was like a bird. Free. Light. Beautiful.

And Armando looked at her, as if bewitched, spellbound and enchanted. With all eyes he watched as she came closer and closer to him, her skirts rustling and swaying mesmerizingly. And he realized that he didn't care that it was indecent – to approach a lonely and defenseless girl. He doesn't care – he *will* approach her. He doesn't care that he'll act contrary to the way he is instructed by the code of honor. He doesn't care that he'll do the wrong thing. He doesn't care, because fate doesn't scatter such chances, Armando knew it. He knew that they could never meet again. And so he decided that let him be frowned upon. He doesn't care that he shouldn't be behaving so. He doesn't care that he'll go against what decency orders. He doesn't care about all of this – because now all that he *does* care about is her. So he will not let his fate pass him by. He will approach this beautiful stranger. He will not let her flit away from him. He will go and introduce himself to her.

But, as it turned out, there was no need for him to go anywhere: fate itself brought them together. Her long dress caught on the leg of Armando's table, and his birdie swayed, waved her hands and – flew right into his arms.

“Careful, muchacha bonita,” said Salazar, catching her and not letting her fall. He wanted to invite her to sit next to him. He wanted to step back, introduce himself, gallantly push aside a chair for her, but... he couldn't. He just couldn't bring himself to let her out of his arms. And he didn't know how, he didn't know why, but – he sat her not on a chair beside him, no: he sat her on his lap.

“God himself brought us together. Destiny itself brought you to me,” Armando told her earnestly. But the ethereal beauty didn't seem to have heard him. She froze in his arms like a wild, shy little sparrow. She looked at him uncomprehendingly. With big, dark, frightened eyes. She cocked her head to one side bird-like. And then she looked away.

Salazar hadn't known how she ended up being here, in this tavern. He hadn't known why she was here alone. He hadn't known what brought her right here and right now. Armando hadn't known any of this, but he felt it.

“It's fate, my angel. Fate itself brought us together,” said Captain Salazar.

She hadn't said anything on it. She listened to him, but seemed not to hear him. She was silent, she said nothing and she hadn't demanded to be released immediately. She wasn't outraged that he dared to touch her. She hadn't thrown his hands off her, hadn't questioned him with indignation:

“What do you allow yourself, señor?!”

She hadn't tried to break free – but only because fear froze her to the very heart and hadn't allowed

her to move.

“Don’t be afraid of me, my beautiful. Don’t be afraid,” Armando said. “No te haré daño, mi pájaro,” he assured her. “I will not hurt you, my little birdie, don’t be afraid,” he repeated once more.

And it must have put her out of her stupor. Because she immediately grabbed a bottle of gin from the table and drained it in one go.

The alcohol must have helped her to pull herself together and to pluck up her courage. Because after that she looked at Armando again. She looked him directly in the eyes — and turned up her nose at him. And tried to flit away, to slip out of his hands.

And though Armando knew full well that it was indecent. That he shouldn’t be behaving in such a way. That he needed to let her go. Nevertheless, he couldn’t bring himself to unclench his hands. Couldn’t bring himself to unfold his arms around her. He couldn’t bring himself to let her go. He just... couldn’t.

“Better find yourself a lass,” cautiously moving away from him as far as the ring of Armando’s hands allowed, she said quietly in English. She said that it would be better if he found himself a girl – meaning a wicked, wanton wench who wouldn’t mind sitting on his lap, because she wasn’t like this. She was señorita of noble blood, she obviously was, and so it was unbecoming of her to behave in such a way.

“Ya te encontré, bonita señorita,” the Spaniard said. He already found her. And there will be no one else to look for, not now. Not ever.

Never before he met a girl that could steal his breath away like that birdie did. Never before he met a girl that could make his heart flutter and stutter like it did now. He had had women before – of course he had. But none of them stirred up his passion like that. None of them made him drunk on the desire, none of them made him as dizzy as no amount of fine wine could ever hope to. None of them were like her. None of them could match her. None of them, none at all.

The very fates brought them together, the fates and the destiny themselves.

Armando nodded for another bottle of gin to be put in front of them. Looking at him cautiously, his birdie took the bottle. And clearly settled herself more comfortably on his lap.

Oh, what a birdie he caught! She puts on a brave face. But – she is afraid. And if you try pressing her closer to you – she moves away immediately and looks wary. But if you beckon her. And if you show her that you will never offend her, will never hurt her, that you mean no harm – she will curiously fly closer to see what you will offer to her.

What a birdie he caught! If you tighten your arms around her, if you press her down closer to you – she will move away immediately. But if you let her just sit on your lap, just be embraced tenderly by your hands – then she slowly moves closer and presses herself to you on her own free will.

Oh, what a birdie he got! What a skittish, flighty, beautiful, unique and rare birdie!

At first she only silently, slowly drank her gin, listened indifferently to the compliments and looked closed off. But then she asked him who he was. In English again, although Armando saw that she also understood in Spanish.

Captain Salazar tried to tell her about himself. That he is an honest man, and a noble one. That with him she would have nothing to fear. That he is a famous captain – and that he will make a good match for her. Her future with him will be cloudless.

Armando was telling her about himself. But stopped immediately when she suddenly interrupted him – by putting a finger on his lips.

“Captain, you say, famous?” she asked with a smile.

And Armando forgot what he was saying and why. He forgot everything because she *touched* him. By her own free will. She touched his lips. And she smiled at him. And Armando forgot everything – so much so that in response to her question he managed to tell her only his name.

“Captain Armando Salazar,” he introduced himself once more.

She looked at him and waited for him to say more. Armando asked her – maybe she had heard of him?

But she hadn’t known anything about him, hadn’t heard anything. And then she sipped some more

gin. The alcohol, apparently, finally helped her to completely loosen up, because now there was a slight blush on her cheeks, and a sly smile on her lips.

She provoked him, teased him, winded him up. And smiled bravely, even boldly, and said that she hadn't heard anything about him, hadn't known anything. There are so many stories that men tell – one is more insane than the other, about different sailors, about different captains, which one of them is about him? And if he is a well-known captain, then why had she heard nothing of him? Was he lying to her? Or at least exaggerating?

And when Armando said with ardor that no, of course not. He hadn't lied to her. She smiled.

And... touched another man. She stopped the passing sailor by touching that sailor's hand.

Salazar's face darkened. And the only thing that saved that poor fellow from reprisal was that she immediately removed her hand from this dirty scoundrel and laid it back on Armando's shoulder.

The *Silent Mary* just arrived at this port, and so the rumour among the people had not yet spread that it's unwise to anger Captain Salazar – but the sailor with whom his birdie spoke, even without any rumours, realized that it was better for him to go where he was going – while he still could. He understood it by just one look at Armando.

"That's it. That's exactly what I'm saying. Who is it, mi amigo? I don't know who you are talking about. I never heard anything about that great captain, and nobody else has ever heard about him. No one knows about him and no one's heard of him. Are you sure he's a captain? That he's so great?" she chirped.

She behaved bravely, even boldly. If anyone else spoke with Armando in such a way – that poor soul would be in a lot of trouble. But she must have felt that she could do it. Could tease. Could taunt. Could wind him up. Because he promised her: he will not hurt her, nor will he offend her. She hadn't known anything about him simply because those who knew Captain Salazar didn't dare to tell tales about him. And the absurd stories that she cited as an example no one would have dared to tell about him. He was a well-known pirate hunter, but he never tolerated idle rumours and never allowed all that tittle-tattle about himself and his battles. Salazar didn't leave his enemies alive and he didn't permit his subordinates to wag their tongues. And so they only whispered about him – afraid to speak too loudly and to draw troubles upon them, because everyone knew:

Armando was terrible in anger.

Salazar told her that he sends the ships under a black flag to sleep beneath the waves, that he scourged the seas and that soon he will exterminate the pirate filth from it once and for all.

She was moving closer to him, reaching out and smiling while she drank her gin and listened to him – but then, when Armando in his passion pressed her closer to him, she suddenly seemed to remember that he was a man. That she was sitting on his lap. That they are sitting like this with the whole tavern looking, that people *are* looking at them and whispering, that it's so indecent, that he spots her honour. And of course the morals in the colonies were simpler than at the royal court in Madrid, but even here the people of the noble blood never dared to allow themselves such liberties. And then in her eyes there was fear again. Then she tried to move away from him. Then she reached for the alcohol so that it'll help her regain her courage.

She was all but woven from contradictions: she looked confidently, steadily, straight at him, she grinned, she smirked, she smiled, she even touched him – she *touched* him on her own free will!..

And then she suddenly seemed to remember that he was a *man*. And that they were *touching* each other. That they were touching each other in a way that is absolutely improper for a barely-familiar man and woman. And then she again tried to slip away, to move away, to observe decency.

Gill-flirt. She just flirted with him shamelessly, and now, when Armando succumbed to provocations and pressed her closer to him – suddenly looked at him again with frightful eyes. And hurried to move away.

Gill-flirt. She had just taken the apple from his hand and, daringly staring at Armando, looking him right into the eyes – caressed with her lips the trail that remained on it from the teeth of Salazar.

Gill-flirt. For the love of God, she just now bent to his lips, so close that they were practically *breathing* each other!

Gill-flirt. She knew that she was driving him mad. She knew she made him giddy. She knew she

was playing with fire. God, she should have known that you can't tease a man like this! But as soon as he tried to touch her hand with a kiss, she got frightened again. Maybe because she sensed it implicitly: on such innocent caresses Salazar might not stop. She got frightened, she took her hand away from him and then she tried to back off. She got frightened when she saw what kind of desires burned in Armando because of her. She got frightened when she saw that she stirred up passion in him that won't be so easily quenched. She got frightened – and she tried to fly away. But Armando couldn't lose his hold of her, he just *couldn't*. The very fates brought them together. And this girl. This beauty. This goddess. This brave, proud, freedom-loving birdie. She will be his. She is his destiny. And they will be together. She hurried off somewhere. Tried to fly away. But to let her go?.. But lose his hold of her?.. But unclench his arms?.. No, Armando couldn't. She attracted him, captivated him, fascinated him. And he followed her, not paying attention to anything else. Not hearing anything but her frequent breathing, and seeing nothing but her gleaming lips, wetted by gin. They walked out of the tavern. They went out together on the street. She turned into an alley – which turned out to be a dead end. She turned quickly, frightfully – and froze, looking at him with large, dark eyes... and in their depths Captain Salazar for a moment clearly saw fear. He frightened her. Armando had known it before, had noticed it from the very start, had clearly seen it in her eyes: he frightened her. She was frightened by his passion, frightened by his vigor, frightened, scared and afraid. But to take a step back. But to retreat, even if not too far and for a little while. But to resist temptation – Captain Salazar still couldn't. Especially when his daring flirtatious birdie suddenly smiled at him languidly, invitingly, and, throwing a smoking hot glance at him from under her eyelashes, said: you don't have to wait. He stepped toward her. He drew her into his arms. He leant toward her lips and... ...and the world faded.

* * *

Armando came to himself in the very same dead end, but alone and only in his underwear, because everything else was gone: his clothes, his shoes, his weapons, his purse. But that wasn't important. *She* was gone – and blast it all if it wouldn't be better if anything, if *everything* else got lost but her. At first Armando hoped that the glass shards around him appeared when she had smashed the bottle on his head. That she did it because she was frightened, because he frightened her. God, he knew, he bloody *knew* how scared she was! But still he went after her. But still he couldn't resist the temptation. At first Armando hoped that it was her doing, that she defended her honour. That his brave, daring little birdie smashed a bottle on his head – and fled hastily, leaving Salazar to lie in that dead end alone where some scoundrel must have found his unconscious body and took him to the cleaners. Armando really wanted to believe in it, because then he had a chance to find her. Then he had a chance to beg her for forgiveness, to apologize to her for his behaviour. He had serious intentions: he was going to take her down the aisle. But he couldn't tear his eyes off her, nor could he remove his hands off her. And at some point he even thought: so what if he would first snatch a kiss or two from her lips, and only then go looking for a priest for them? Armando tried to find her. He searched here, there, and everywhere. He asked about her to every passerby. He promised a good reward – and people readily told him that they saw his beautiful stranger. She was seen here and there, she was seen by a baker, an innkeeper and a blacksmith, by a washerwoman and a guard. Even the governor's wife, though she paled and appeared to be frightened by his questions – but still she admitted that she had seen her, that his birdie had visited them, for a short while, only to pay her respects, but – she *had* visited them. However, no one could tell Armando her name. And no one saw her after she left that tavern with him.

She was plumb gone. Disappeared without a trace. Melted into thin air. As if she never really existed. As if she was just a ghost.

But Armando knew for sure: she was real. She was a woman of flesh and blood. And so Captain Salazar turned the entire city upside down while searching for her – but it turned out to be in vain. And that meant that he hoped in vain, too.

She hadn't broken a bottle on his head: an empty bottle of gin must have fell out of her hands when they were dishonourably and despicably attacked from the back by pirates. Those scoundrels must have knocked Armando senseless, hitting him with something heavy on the head. And then they took away from him the most precious thing that could only be taken. After all, they hadn't just taken away from him his pants, his shirt, his boots, his purse and his weapons, no. They took away from him his very heart.

It was pirates, it was surely pirates. Because everyone told Armando not only about his beautiful stranger, but also about the sea robbers who were recently seen in the places nearby.

And that meant that in that ill-fated alley they were attacked by pirates. And that meant that the pirates took his beautiful stranger with them. And that meant that now she languished in captivity of these bloodthirsty, evil, spiteful sea robbers.

And *that* meant that Captain Salazar will burn and destroy them all. All pirates, ruthlessly, rigorously and without any pity. All pirates – even if they beg for mercy. All pirates – all but one. He will leave one of them alive, just one. For this one survivor to tell tales. So that rumours will spread among the pirates. So that one day his beautiful stranger, languishing in captivity of these filthy animals, will hear stories about him. She will hear about him and she will know that he will come for her. That he was looking for her. That he is looking for her – and that he will find her. He'll find her. He'll make sure to find her. No matter what it takes, at any costs, he *will* find her – or die trying.

* * *

Weeks passed by, then months. Rumours about him were spreading among people wider and wider day by day – and day by day he bated his hope to hear anything about her.

At first Salazar personally took on boarding each ship under a black flag. He captured pirates, took them captive, interrogated them, tried to pry out the truth out of them, but – no one knew anything. No one heard anything. Rumours about Captain Salazar, now El Matador del Mar – the Butcher of the Sea, heard everyone – but no one had ever heard anything about his beautiful stranger.

Time waxed on. His hope faded – and his heart hardened. Armando stopped taking pirate ships to board – he just drowned them, sent them right to the devil and the hell, and destroyed them all.

Time waxed on. And Salazar no longer believed that he would see his birdie ever again. Now Salazar believed only that he would see that the pirates would pay for everything.

Armando will end this plague. He will do anything and everything to make sure that the black flags will no longer stain the sea.

Pirates took everything from him. Pirates took away his family and his hope for a family. Pirates took from him his grandfather and father. Pirates took from him his beloved. Pirates took from him *every. Single. Thing.*

And pirates will pay for it the highest, the bloodiest price. He will destroy them all. Every single one of them. He will destroy them *all* – and he will avenge his father, his grandfather, his beloved. He will destroy them all – and never again will any pirate take away anyone's father, grandfather or beloved. Never again. *Never.*

...

In the teeth of death, pirates often begged for mercy. But what can mercy get a man whose heart was torn out from him? Why should a man get *pity* when the most precious thing was taken away from him without any? Where should Salazar have found *compassion* for those monsters who were responsible for his loss?

No, Armando never felt sorry for the dozens of ships under the black flag that he sent right to the

sea bottom.

No, Armando never felt sorry for the hundreds of pirates sent to sleep with the fishes.

But... Armando was sorry that he frightened his birdie. And that he didn't have the time to tell her how much he loved her.

* * *

The next time Armando saw his birdie at the moment of his highest triumph.

The last of pirate ships were burning before his eyes. It was feeding Captain Salazar's sight. He enjoyed it, enjoyed that sense of righteous vengeance. And then suddenly...

There was a shout – a ship's hail.

At first Armando thought – he must be hearing things. At first he thought – he imagined it. At first he thought – behind the noise of the wind, the crackling of the fire, the splash of waves, the groaning of the ships going straight to the sea bottom – he dreamed of the voice of his birdie.

But no. One ship had tried to escape through the smoke. One pirate ship. And in its crow's nest was... A boy?.. A cheeky nestling. He mocked him. He teased him. He beckoned to him – shouting that Salazar should surrender. Shouting for Salazar to lay down his arms.

Armando looked through the spyglass that by his order was handed over to him. He put it down immediately – he thought he seemed to see it. But no: he looked again. He looked closely. And he realized that no, he hadn't imagined things. He hadn't imagined it.

It was his birdie, Armando recognized her immediately. Armando would have recognized her in any guise – and, it turns out, even in this one, even in pirate's.

The birdie grabbed the rope, deftly jumped down from the crow's nest – and hoisted the black flag on the ship. The Jolly Roger was displayed proudly. It was fluttering in the wind.

Armando's heart was fluttering, too – with a feeling as black as that wretched flag.

For Salazar these blackjacks always were like a red flag to a bull. Salazar always lost it by one look on them – but *now*, when *she*, his birdie, hoisted it up...

At that moment Captain Salazar knew for sure that nothing on Earth would stop him from boarding this... *Wicked Wench*?..

What a strange name for a ship. Even a pirate one. What a strange name for the ship on board of which his birdie was. And... at the helm of which she confidently went to stand.

Captain Salazar chased the last pirate ship. He flew after his birdie, noticing nothing but her, seeing only the same delicate, fine figure in front of him, and the same hair streaming in the breeze. And knowing that he would not find peace until he captured the *Wicked Wench*. Until he brought his birdie to his cabin. Until he could understand. Until he could find the answers to his questions.

Until he knew for sure whom this birdie fooled: him – or pirates? Who is hiding under these clothes: a young lad – or a young lass? What winds brought his birdie to this pirate ship? The bird is not a captive on the ship. So who was in front of Salazar now? A pirate lad – or pirate lass? And who was sitting on Salazar's lap then?

About whom Armando dreamed for all this time? Whom he fancied? About whom he went crazy? And why, even in a man's shirt (in *his*, Salazar's, shirt!..), he can't take his eyes off his birdie?

Whose body was hidden under the clothes – the boy's or the girl's? Salazar hadn't known for sure. But for some reason he didn't care. Whoever hid under these clothes, whoever's body it was, a lass or a lad – Salazar will possess it anyway. No matter on whose head his birdie did a number – the chicklet all the same won't escape from Armando. Fate brought them together – for better or for worse. And on no wings will his birdie be able to fly away from they destiny.

He went once to the dead end after his birdie. Now he went after his birdie again – to his death and to his end, as it turned out.

He fell for that trick again – he wasn't thinking straight: he wasn't thinking about anything but his birdie. He fell for that trick again – he followed his birdie blindly, like once before, a few long months ago, when Armando followed the bird out of the tavern – he sailed after it now. He fell for that trick again – and once again he had no clue that he was going straight into the trap. He fell for

that trick again – as hard as he fell for his chick.

He fell into the trap again, sailed into the trap set for him on all sails. And he couldn't drop the anchor. He couldn't stop. He didn't have the time to turn around like the pirates did.

And at that moment it became clear that he had lost. And at that moment... The *Wicked Wench* and the *Silent Mary* came up with each other. They turned out so close to each other, almost side to side. And his birdie passed him by, looking him directly in the eyes – looking cheeky, cocky and oh so daring.

For a moment, fear flashed through that bird's eyes – a familiar, underlying fear. For a moment it became clear that not only Armando recognized his birdie. But then the nestling haughtily ruffled up – and looked so arrogant, so *dismissive*. But then his birdie was hailed.

"Jack!" Armando clearly heard.

"Sparrow!" Armando clearly heard.

Jack... Sparrow...

Only now Salazar had learned the name of the bird that had long ago deprived him of his peace. A name that will haunt him forever.

His birdie turned away from him. And Armando realized that he was a fool. He realized what a *fool* he was. That he invented himself the image of a fair lady who never really existed. And that was the reason why he couldn't find the girl for whom he fell head over heels – because there was no one to look for. He fell in love with a lie. He dreamed about a deceit. He was tricked by the cunning game of a stupid nestling who for some reason put on a woman's dress – and in an evil hour got on Salazar's way.

And in Armando's chest began to flare up a fury, burning everything in its path.

And as zealously as he had once prayed God for his birdie, now he began to *curse* it.

Armando was a fool, he was such a fool.

He was a fool to think before that good fortune brought them together, because it was an ill fate – the ill fate that they call sometimes a fall of a sparrow. And isn't it funny that his ill fate, as it turned out, was to fall for *the Sparrow*?

He was a fool, he oh-so-foolishly thought before that his birdie was sent to him by God. Now he knew: it was the *devil*. The devil himself lured them into his Triangle. The devil himself...

...

Captain Salazar began to burn from the inside out long before they sailed on all sails into the Devil's Triangle.

The boy took everything from him. Leaving only... bitterness. Anger. Rage. And an intolerable, unquenchable thirst. To find. To catch. And to cut off the wings of this treacherous, this mean, this... *birdie*.

His birdie.

* * *

The trap snapped shut.

The gates of the prison closed behind the *Silent Mary*.

And the curse burned Captain Armando Salazar's heart out of his chest.

But he hadn't felt chagrin because he fell into the trap.

He hadn't felt sorrow when the sides of the *Silent Mary* cracked and the masts of his ship broke.

There was no pity in him for the sailors who were shouting in the agony.

The only regret that Armando has felt was that once his only sorrow was that he hadn't declared his love to his birdie. To this despicable creature, this treacherous chick, this pirate, this... *Sparrow*.

To Jack... Sparrow.

* * *

For a long time Armando wanted to die for his birdie. And now, it turns out, he's dying because of this treacherous pirate bird?..

The pirate took everything from him. The pirate took from him his dream.
And he'll pay dearly for this. He'll pay the highest price. The most dreadful price. The most
horrendous price for all of the birds: he'll pay for everything by his freedom – and by his wings.

* * *

An eternal night and darkness reigned in the Devil's Triangle. A long night, an endless and
perpetual one – and a palpable darkness, a black and inky one.

There was not a beam of light, not a glimmer of hope.

But Armando still hoped. And dreamed. And fantasised. And believed. And he knew: fate will
bring them together again. And Armando will have his birdie on his lap again. As then, on their
very first meeting. Sparrow is a small bird, and a light-boned one, he weighs almost nothing. And
his bones were just like a bird's. Brittle. And *fragile*. Squeeze those fine wrists a little too tightly –
and they will break.

And Sparrow, he will break too – into a thousand tricky words, false promises and sweet lies. He
will babble. He will clatter. He will even *purr* some honeysweet nonsense. And he will sit. On
Armando's lap. As then. He will sit and he will be afraid. He will sit and from time to time he will
try to fly off – even knowing that he can't escape, that there will be no escape for him this time,
that there will be nowhere to go, he will still *try* – futilely – to slip away. He will sit and he will try
to chirp something falsely cheerful. He will sit and prattle, he will sit and wag his tongue, he will
sit and he will try to even coo something sweet to Salazar – he will sit on Armando's lap and he
will try to fool him with his smooth talk; he will try to promise anything and everything to have a
chance to break free – while not giving Salazar a reason to squeeze his hands on birdie's wrists
harder, so that fragile, light, bird-like bones won't break in Armando's grip.

One day, Sparrow will be in his hands again. And Salazar will put him on his knees. And then...
Then he'll put him on his lap. On his, Armando's, lap. As then... As *then*...

...

Salazar dreamed that he would catch this birdie. The bird fell into his hands once, but managed to
slip away. The bird flew so very close to Armando for the second time, but – not too close, not
close enough, not so that Armando could touch – and could catch; and although the birdie was so
temptingly close to him, but still – hadn't even for a moment touched Salazar even with a tip of its
wings. But for the third time – no. For the third time the bird won't get away from him.

He will catch this birdie. He'll cut off its wings so that it won't fly away from him ever again.
He'll wrap it up in chains – so that it won't be able to go anywhere. He'll lock it in a cage – to
make sure that it'll stay with him forever.

And Salazar dreamed of catching this birdie. He'll whip its back for making a fool out of Salazar
with its chirping. He'll tear the clothes off that bird – and he'll find out for sure who his birdie was,
a lad or a lass.

Although he already had no doubt: it was a boy. He had already seen it clearly when the cheeky
chick passed him, haughtily ruffling up its feathers. He saw it in the birdie's open shirt collar: the
bare chest was not female's – it was a male one. He understood it by the sound of its voice. The
boy is quite young. Just a fledgling. But arrogant, so *arrogant* and cocksure. Turning his nose up
disdainfully – he passed Salazar by.

A proud birdie. A free birdie. But for a moment... Oh, for a moment he still got frightened. For a
moment, fear flashed through his eyes.

Intoxicating, enticing fear. The fear that Salazar dreamed of seeing in the eyes of this audacious,
cheeky chicklet again.

Oh, what Armando wouldn't give to just slap him on the cheeks for that damned cheekiness!..

And then... Then press a dagger to Sparrow's throat – slightly, with barely any force. Just enough
to let the blood out. To let it flow over the tanned skin – bright, hot and crimson. And so that in his
hands the bird will freeze in fear, afraid to move. Afraid that if he'll twitch even just a little – his
throat will be cut open.

But death will be too easy a fate, wouldn't it? Kill him – and then what? It will bring no salvation to Armando, none whatsoever. Nothing can remove his curses from him. And that means – Salazar will suffer forever. And for forever he'll make his birdie suffer with him.

The birdie will regret that it mocked him. Regret that it deceived him. Curse the day when the fate brought them together.

And the fate *did* brought them to each other. Brought them *together*... And entwined they destinies, tied them tightly – in a tangled, *united* mess. And fate will connect their ways once again, Armando knew it, he just *knew*.

And then, when his hour comes. Then, when Sparrow would be in his hands... When Sparrow would be in his power... Oh, *then*!..

...

Salazar dreamed how he'll squeeze bruises into the wrists that he once wished to touch reverently with the lightest of kisses. Salazar dreamed how he'll bite those lips to blood – lips that before he had longed to only tenderly caress with his own. Salazar dreamed how he'll make his birdie truly *his*. How Sparrow will fight in his hands, how he'll try to break free. How he'll be desperately pleading to let him go. How he will be begging him for mercy.

Oh, how desperately, how *vainly* that birdie will be begging him!..

...and how *sweetly*.

...

"Just let me catch you, Sparrow. Just let me get a hold of you," Salazar whispered hotly. "Just *let me*..."

...

For years, Salazar dreamed of catching his birdie. He dreamed, fancied, fantasised – and didn't doubt: that day will come. One day the fate will cross their paths again.

* * *

He had to wait for the next meeting for decades. But Salazar was a dead man, and the dead are a patient folk. Dead men can wait.

And Salazar knew, with all of his being he believed that the next meeting Sparrow won't be able to pass. And next time Sparrow won't be able to just pass him by, nor would he be able to fly away from his hands ever again.

And Salazar knew, he believed with all of his being that someday the walls of their prison would collapse. One day, the *Silent Mary* with his crew of dead men will be set free. And then... Oh, *then*... Sparrow will pay him for everything. And he will pay *very dearly*.

And even though the time passed till the next meeting was not counted in months and years, but decades – but still Armando lived to see it. But he hadn't waited for nothing, he hadn't believed in vain – the walls of their prison collapsed. The *Silent Mary* was finally on the loose.

His sailors were delighted. They laughed. Overjoyed, they shouted: "We are free!". And Armando... He turned his face up to the sun – for the first time in decades. He smiled happily.

And he breathed out: "Very well... Now, it's time to hunt a pirate."

It's time to catch his birdie. But it won't be a matter – the seas now belong to the dead.

Salazar waited and believed. And Salazar wasn't waiting and believing in vain. Very soon one scoundrel kindly volunteered to tail him to his pirate. Very soon, Jack Sparrow's ship appeared on the horizon.

And that meant – very soon Armando will finally catch his birdie.

* * *

"Sparrow..." Armando said, looking his birdie over. He was wet. Scared. Shivering on the shore. Lying at his feet. Looking at him with the same eyes: big. Dark. *Frightened*. "Well hello, *Jack Sparrow*."

"Spanish!" Sparrow gasped.

And then he realized that Armando can't overcome that last step that separated them. He can't step on land. And even if Sparrow was literally lying at his feet, but – Salazar can't reach out and touch him. Not now.

Not *yet*.

"It's time to settle old scores."

"Oh no, no, no, no, no, don't bother, there is no need to bother, really! And no need to keep any counts, absolutely no need! I'm forgiving everything, amigo," the pirate said nervously.

"You'll pay for everything, *Sparrow*."

"The Butcher, right? You're the Butcher, aren't you? Oh, I'll give you a cow!" Sparrow declared cheerfully, and smiled oh-so-charmingly. "As a sign of our reconciliation."

"El Matador del Mar," Salazar corrected. "The Butcher of the *Sea*."

"A *sea* cow, then?" suggested Sparrow, smiling ingratiatingly.

Salazar just continued to stare at him, to look closely, *intently*. Just like a *butcher* would look. At some *meat*. He stared at his birdie – and smiled like a predator.

"Well, if you happen to change your mind, do tell me. But now I've got to fly. I'd love to chat, but I have business here on this island, you see. It's urgent. Very, *very* urgent."

Captain Salazar said that he would wait for him. That he *will* wait for him. And wait. And wait. For however long it takes.

Sparrow, flapping his arms like wings, hurried to fly away, chirping something about Salazar having no need to wait for him. But Armando had waited for the second meeting with this birdie for months. He waited for the third encounter for decades. And no matter how soon the fourth meeting came, Salazar *will* wait for it.

And as it turned out, this time around Armando almost didn't have to wait at all.

* * *

Captain Salazar dealt with the British ship that had the audacity to try to claim his prey. And then – he stepped on board of the *Black Pearl*. And in a singsong voice, almost kindly he called out:

"Jack Sparro-o-ow!"

The birdie hadn't flown to him of its own free will. Of course not. Armando politely asked one of the pirates nearby where to look for Jack – and a shaking hand pointed him the right direction.

At first Salazar hadn't noticed anyone on the ship's bow. He even thought: did that pirate scum really dare to deceive him? But then – he saw the birdie flying from him... straight on his ship?..

"You can't hide from me," Armando told him. And jumped right after him.

Because Sparrow won't be able to run away now. Won't be able to hide from him. Won't get away. He left once. He sailed away the second time. He even managed to not get caught the third time around. But for the fourth time? No, there will be no escape for him this time, there will be *no escape*.

Sparrow tried to flit away from Armando. Just like a bird Sparrow flew hastily between their ships. He jumped from cannon to cannon, leaped from ledge to ledge, in hope of getting away – he hopped from one gun port lid to another, just like his little namesakes did when they hopped on the ground.

And then he jumped in – right into the body of the ship. Then Sparrow cautiously, slowly crept along the gun deck of the *Silent Mary* – coming straight to her captain.

Armando came out to the light. And Jack screamed.

"Aaah!" Sparrow shouted in surprise. And then he realized who was standing in front of him, and cried out: "Spanish!"

Salazar advanced on him, baring his sword.

"Maybe we can reach an agreement?" the bird warily tried to smile, glancing around cautiously.

Salazar froze for a second, looked thoughtfully and *hungrily* at his birdie... "Or better I'll find you a lass!" Sparrow chirped hastily. "I happen to know just the right languishing Spanish beauty for you! Wouldn't you like me to introduce you to her?"

Armando hadn't deigned to answer this question: he silently attacked Sparrow. And with a loud clank steel clashed with steel.

"You'll like her!" exclaimed the pirate, skipping out of Salazar's way.

"She's so... *Spanish*," the pirate assured him, parrying the blows of Salazar's sword.

"And a zealous Catholic!" shouted the pirate while being steadily cornered by Armando.

"She drank from the fountain of youth, so now she's always young, always beautiful," the pirate told him confidentially, then ducked and rolled back straight into the corner.

"And you have a lot in common with her!" said the pirate, breathing heavily.

Salazar, enjoying the clearly visible fear in Sparrow's eyes, slowly impended over him.

"You will find a common language. You don't even have to look for it! You are both *Spanish* and speak *Spanish*! I assure you: you will lose your head over her. Fall in love, get married and live forever with each other. Sounds great, isn't it? You agree to this, right?"

"Not in this life," said Armando.

"Why not in this one? Never put off till next life what can be done in this one!"

"That's for sure," Salazar agreed, swinging to finally dislodge the weapon from the pirate's hands.

The *Silent Mary* swayed to the side and Sparrow rolled headfirst out of the corner, leaped to his feet and again began to jump and to hop. He was bending and leaning over, he was swaying and staggering while he was trying to hold off Armando's raging attacks on him.

"And every time she opens her mouth, I want to go to church!" Jack exclaimed, running away.

"What, she sings like an angel?" Salazar asked mockingly.

Sparrow's face took on a very strange expression, and then, wincing, he said: "Well... not *exactly*." Sparrow seemed to remember something. He was lost in thought for a second. And – that second was long enough for Salazar to take advantage of pirate's distraction.

The bird repelled the attack – but couldn't keep its balance. It fell right at Salazar's feet. And the pirate's sword with a loud clank flew away: Armando finally knocked it out of Sparrow's hands.

"And she knows how to impersonate me. She's very good at it. Looks very similar. Even I can't always tell that it's not me in front of me," Sparrow said meaningfully. And then he even got up on his elbows, on his own free will he leaned toward Salazar and confidently breathed out, as he had once breathed out straight into Armando's lips while sitting in a woman's dress on his lap: "Savvy, love?"

And Salazar felt the surge of age-old rage burning anew in him. That even like this, even defeated and lying at his feet – this bird still dared to mock him.

But no matter – he won't be so cocky for much longer. After all, now Sparrow was finally in his place.

Now Sparrow was finally lying at Armando's feet. Unarmed. Defenseless. He lay at his feet – and Salazar thought that now it's time to slowly, savoring every moment of it, put a sword to his throat. And let the blood run out a little, just to see how beautifully the scarlet drops will run down the bird's neck. And just to hear how Sparrow will sing then. How he'll start begging him for mercy. The pirate had already realized that he had been caught. He realized that he was defeated. He realized that he will not wiggle out of Armando's grasp and won't be able to fly away. And now the pirate should start pleading to spare him. Crying for quarter. Begging for mercy. Asking for his life.

But Sparrow was silent. As if he knew: there was no use in begging. The Butcher of the Sea knows no pity. The Butcher of the Sea knows no mercy. The Butcher of the Sea won't be moved by cries and tears.

And Sparrow was silent. And since he knew that there was no use in begging. And no use to offer him cows and chicks, too. And since he realized this – so quickly, much quicker than everyone else did. Then what now? What he will start to offer now? What the former captain of the ship with a suggestive name of the *Wicked Wench* will suggest to him now?

Jack opened his mouth.

Armando was wondering what he would try to say. What else he will try to offer. After all, he already guessed what Salazar wants from him – of course he guessed it. Of course he realized what

kind of carnal desires were reigning over the Butcher of the Sea – for good reason he stopped trying to chirp about meat and sing about some Spanish chick. Because he wanted to offer someone else in his place.

And now, it seems, he began to realize that no one will take his place in Salazar's cage. And he opened his mouth.

Armando assumed that Jack would say anything. From pleading to boasting, from proposals to threats.

But Sparrow said: "*Island*". Looking intently behind Salazar.

Armando turned around – and saw the rapidly approaching land. And when he looked back – the birdie was no longer lying at his feet. The birdie already flew away.

Armando's sailors hurriedly returned from the *Black Pearl* back on board the *Silent Mary*. The land was getting closer. The land was dangerously close by now. And the closer was the land – the farther away from him was Sparrow.

Sparrow, who flitted out of his hands thrice by now. Sparrow, who could very well fly from him

for the fourth time. Sparrow, whom Armando will no longer allow to get out of his grasp.

Salazar grabbed the rope and again found himself on board of the *Black Pearl*. He managed to catch Sparrow – although he thought to the last that he won't be able to do it, that the birdie will yet again flit away from him. When Armando realized that he couldn't turn the pirate ship back to sea in time. When he thought that he would have to take a girl with him, or the boy whom he had once left alive. When Captain Salazar already thought furiously that for the fourth time Sparrow managed to flit out of his hands... it turned out that he didn't. He didn't flit away from him this time. Sparrow – didn't have enough time to fly off. And Armando – managed to catch his birdie. ...because Sparrow unexpectedly pushed Salazar away from the girl and from the boy. Sparrow pushed them away – and found himself in Armando's hands. And he hadn't succeeded in wriggling out, although he struggled, although he fought, although he was twisting and writhing madly. But Salazar held him tight.

And Armando managed to get on board of the *Silent Mary* with his birdie before the *Black Pearl* reached the treacherous land.

...

The *Silent Mary* sailed away. And the *Black Pearl* hadn't even tried to follow them to retrieve her captain.

Pirates. Cowardly, pathetic creatures.

On the *Pearl* screamed the girl from whom the pirate pushed Salazar away. She screamed: "Jack!". On the *Pearl* was shouting the boy whom Salazar once left alive. He also shouted: "Jack!". And even Barbossa – staggered and appeared to turn pale.

But no one went after Sparrow. Because pirates never went after anyone. Because pirates always left the stragglers behind.

* * *

Sparrow wrenched out of Salazar's hands after all – but not when Armando just grabbed him, nor when they still flew over the sea, no – only when they were already on the *Silent Mary*. But Sparrow twisted out of Salazar's hands – and fell headfirst onto the deck. He got up immediately and smiled broadly.

"I came to you with a generous offer, gentlemen. I suggest you surrender, and I'll spare your lives," said Sparrow and promptly closed his mouth. He looked at the dead men around him carefully...

"I'll spare your deaths," he amended himself. "Not-lives," once more Sparrow corrected himself. Then he waved his hand in the emptiness that separated one sailor's hand from the rest of his body... "Not-deaths?.. What do you call it?.." asked Sparrow while moving closer to Armando's subordinates and looking them in the eyes soulfully.

No one answered him. Salazar's sailors stood around the pirate in a circle – with arms at ready. They stood and waited for their captain's orders. And Captain Sparrow... he chirped with

enthusiasm, waving his arms lively:

“Look, you know Barbossa. It’s that nasty pirate with a nightmare of a wig, his breath stinks something terrible,” Jack elaborated. “So, you see, not so long ago he was looking exactly the same as you do now, mate,” Sparrow pointed randomly to the first sailor that he happen to glance on. “No, he was a bit more whole and much more bony,” Sparrow said, looking thoughtfully at the absent extremities of the dead man at whom he had been pointing with a finger. “He was looking exactly like you are here!” Jack pointed to another skeleton. “I swear you could be mistaken for twins! And what do you think? That old sea dog couldn’t stand it even for a decade – howled at the moon and began to try to lift the curse!”

“And he lifted it?..” one of the sailors dared to ask.

“As you can see: he walks now in flesh and blood and almost don’t rattle his bones, he munches his apples and puts wigs one more nightmarish then the other on his bald patch. And all this is due to me. And to help you is also possible. I just happen to know one sure way...”

“It would be nice to be alive again,” his sailors began to whisper to each other.

“Then help me find myself on that lovely island – and I promise to you: very soon blood once again will run in your veins.”

“Sparrow,” said Salazar. “You’ve fallen into my hands at last. After so many years – you are in my *hands*. And you are definitely not going anywhere now.”

The pirate turned around, saw that all this time Armando was standing right next to him... and stretched his lips into an even broader smile.

“Listen, amigo, you really want to land me on that island, from which we really shouldn’t be sailing away,” Sparrow began to chirp with renewed vigor. “Because if you kill me, then I’ll be dead. Very, very dead. And you all will be not-dead. Very, very not-dead. You, and you, and you too – all of you will be not-dead. And with my death you will deprive yourself of the meaning of your not-lives! Whom then will you be chasing? And for what? You will be bored out of your minds so quickly, I assure you. After all, you can always go back to that island for a short while and ask Barbossa if he misses being a skeleton, if you really don’t believe me that there’s nothing to be missed,” said Sparrow. And then he smiled languidly – as then, in that ill-fated dead end near that damned tavern, when he was standing by the wall in a woman’s dress and beckoning Armando to himself to smash the bottle on his head and to rob him of his money, his clothes and his peace. “I can bring you back to life. I’m *offering* to bring you back to life. And for my part this is a very generous offer. What do you say, Captain? Do we have an accord?” looking at him with these enticing dark eyes, asked Sparrow.

“Oh, no, no, no. You won’t flit away anymore, *birdie*,” said Salazar, walking closer to the pirate.

“You will *never again* fly away from me.”

Sparrow froze with fear when Armando approached him. And he looked at him with all eyes. Dark. Bottomless. The same eyes. And at the depths of these eyes was clearly visible the same fear that Salazar had seen before. The same fear that the pirate felt in each of their meetings, beginning with the most ill-fated one – the very first one. When Sparrow was sitting on his lap. When he drank gin that Salazar treated him to. And when he tried to wriggle out of his hands before Armando could realize whom exactly he got hold of.

“He’s mine. Bring him to my cabin,” Salazar ordered. And then he went to the captain’s bridge – to lay a new course for them and to give instructions to the crew.

“...and we all know that now he’s making another mistake,” Sparrow’s ringing voice reached Armando’s ears.

The sailors silently led the pirate into the captain’s cabin and hadn’t reacted to his words.

“If you miss the chance to lift the curse now – you won’t be able to lift it ever. You will never feel the sea-salty scent of freedom, won’t get a lungful of it, you won’t taste the sweetness of a juicy pulp of a green ripe apple melting in your mouth, and you won’t be able to refresh in your memory how the rum heats your blood. You, here. What would you like to do if you were alive?..”

Whether the sailor answered or managed to remain silent – Salazar was no longer able to hear: the doors of the captain’s cabin got closed behind Sparrow.

But Armando seemed to hear a distant chirp: "...and have you ever considered the mutiny as a way of solving this problem?.. I am, by the way, is also a *captain*..."

Salazar sighed and realized that he had to go to his cabin as soon as possible. He couldn't leave Sparrow without the supervision of his sailors – he surely would have fled at once. But now he began to think that maybe he couldn't leave him under the supervision of anybody either.

Of course Salazar was confident in his crew. But he also had no doubts about how easily one can fall for Sparrow's charms; he had no doubts *at all*.

* * *

Once upon a time, Captain Salazar began to cleanse the seas from pirates because they were bloodthirsty monsters. Once upon a time, Armando began to cleanse the seas from pirates so that no young girl ever had to be afraid. And now – when the pirate defended the girl and the boy not from anybody, but from Armando himself... Now Captain Salazar suddenly realized that he himself became a monster much worse than those from whom he once swore to clean the seas. But for some reason he realized this not when that girl on the ship cried heart-wrenchingly: "Jack!". And not when she was echoed by that young boy. And not even when Barbossa hadn't kept his promises and hadn't brought Sparrow to Armando to save his own hide – but tried to take Sparrow away from Salazar. No, for some reason he realized this only when he looked into Sparrow's eyes when he was standing surrounded by the dead men on the deck of the *Silent Mary*. And he saw it clearly: these were the same eyes of his birdie. The same big, dark, fearful eyes. The birdie was still afraid of him – was frightened then, still feared him now. And same as before he tried not to show his fright. But it was clearly visible, that undercurrent of fear, it was *always* clearly visible in his eyes.

Sparrow looked at him the same way as then he was sitting on his lap. It was the same look of the same dark eyes. And he smiled with the same lips. And he tried to pretend that he wasn't afraid. And he was putting on a brave face. But Salazar saw it. Salazar once again clearly saw it: his birdie is afraid of him. He's still afraid, still as afraid as he was afraid then – if not even more so.

The birdie is *afraid* of him. But went into his hands, almost jumped into them on its own free will – because decided to shield some nestlings with its wings. Someone else's nestlings.

And something ached in Armando's chest. He had no heart now – the curse had it burned out from Salazar's chest. But something in it still *ached*.

And something pulled in his chest – strange, almost forgotten. Just like it pulled long time ago – before the curse.

And Salazar suddenly realized that he didn't know what to do with his birdie. And therefore, to get himself a couple of minutes to collect his thoughts – he went to the captain's bridge. To give orders to his crew. To lay a new course for the *Silent Mary*. All the while thinking that during this time he will remember what he was going to do when his birdie finally falls into his hands. He will remember why he was going to cut its wings so that it could never fly again. Will remember why he was going to wrap it up in chains. Will remember why he wanted to lock it in a cage.

Only now, when at long last Salazar caught his birdie... This cocky pirate looked at him the same way as he always did. It was always him. The same look, the same voice, the same smile. And the same fear in his eyes – the underlying, unconscious fear that drove the bird away, made it spread its wings and flew from him in a rush.

And now, for some reason, Armando didn't know what to do. What should he do with his birdie – now that he finally caught it? He will not let it go – of course he will not let it go ever again. But he caught a song-bird, and those don't sing in captivity. And sure, to have a chance to fly away that birdie will sing him some sweet nonsense – but even so it won't do it willingly, won't do it *like a bird*. So what should Armando do with his birdie? How can he tame it? With what can he lure it? Or again, like a long time ago, should he simply get Sparrow seated on his lap and treat him to a drink? Last time, until the pirate realized in whose hands he found himself in, it did the trick. But it would be foolish to deceive himself into thinking that he could stop on just this.

But it was unlikely to think that Sparrow was deceiving himself into believing that this time around Armando could be stopped by anything, even by an empty bottle of gin smashed on his head. And since none of them had any illusions anyway... Then why wait? Why delay the inevitable? Especially when he didn't want to resist temptation. The very idea that his birdie is now in his cabins, that he's so close... made him dizzy, drove him mad – and no amount of fine wine could ever hope to make him feel as drunk as he felt now drunk on the desire.

By Armando's nod the sailors guarding the doors in his cabin slipped away. Leaving him alone with Sparrow. Or, more precisely, leaving Salazar... alone with himself?.. Armando looked around – but Sparrow was nowhere to be seen. Armando looked again, more closely, and again he saw no one. But he just heard that birdie's chirping, and that means...

Yes. Exactly. He wanted to hide from him. And not just anywhere – behind the curtain!..

Armando pulled the curtain aside, revealing Sparrow to his gaze. And... he saw him. He saw him – and his heart began beating madly.

A living heart. A real, beating, *living heart* – not just a ragingly scorched emptiness in the dead man's chest.

And Armando suddenly got it, he finally saw it clearly. He realized that he was cursed for allowing himself to hate his birdie. For that wish to harm, when he swore to never hurt. And now, when he realized that it was not hatred that should burn in his heart – now the curse had been instantly lifted.

Now he realized that Sparrow had long been in the cage. In his, Salazar's, ribcage – where like a wild bird was beating, desperately and loudly, once again a living heart. And now Armando knew for sure that he shouldn't ever look for any other cage to keep his birdie in.

* * *

"Oh, no, no, no," Armando said as Sparrow visibly shuddered at the sight of him and gulped.

"Don't be afraid. You shouldn't be afraid. No te haré daño, mi pájaro."

"Aha," said Jack, staring at him and, just in case, trying to move away, but only vainly squeezing tighter into the cabin wall. "I have one small penguinistic question. No. Liturgistic. No, it's probably penguinistic. Or is it liturgistic after all?.."

"Linguistic," suggested Salazar.

"Yeah, exactly! That's the word," Jack beamed. "I have one small linguistic question. You see, Spanish isn't my native language. And the meaning of this phrase of yours, they say, could differ. But you just said "I won't touch you", didn't you?"

"No," Salazar shook his head. "I won't hurt you."

"Ah, but surely it won't hurt if you won't touch, right?"

"No, mi pájaro," Armando said firmly. "I promise I won't *hurt* you", he said once more – and touched his birdie.

...

Sparrow leaped away from him like from fire, darted past him swiftly, waving his arms and screaming, and jumped out of the captain's cabin.

Armando even froze in surprise. Then he blinked in surprise. And then he rolled his eyes and went to catch his birdie. Where was he running off in such a great haste and why? Where was he going to hide – on Armando's own ship? And now, when they were in the open sea? Where was he hoping to hole himself up? Really, where?

...

In the darkness and in the joy of being alive again, his sailors hadn't noticed the *Black Pearl* returning for Sparrow. And his birdie has actually managed to fly away from him. Once again.

"Chains," thought Salazar grimly. "Next time he needs to be immediately and tightly wrapped up in *chains*."

* * *

The *Silent Mary* managed to catch on the *Black Pearl* only a few weeks later. And for some reason when the pirate ship appeared on the horizon, on all sails it hurried not from them – but towards. The Sparrow's crew greeted them with joyful smiles, cries of "Thank God!", "Finally!" and "At long last!", and they also in every possible way invited them to set foot on their board.

"Spanish! Awesome! We've been waiting for you. With bated breath. And impatiently. Come with me, quickly!" Sparrow was unexpectedly greatly pleased by Salazar's arrival. And flailed his arms at Armando to follow him into the captain's cabin. "Here!" Jack pointed out, and Armando looked in confusion...

...at a lass?..

"Let me introduce you to each other. Spanish macho, this is a Spanish lass," Sparrow pointed to the girl. "Spanish lass, this is a Spanish macho," Sparrow pointed to Armando. "By the power vested in me by me as the Captain of this ship, I therefore declare you..." Sparrow stopped for a second, then continued: "...a Spanish lass and a Spanish macho. You can... do something with each other. At your own discretion."

Armando came closer to the girl. A beautiful one. In a light dress. A black-haired, brown-eyed lass that was shooting fire with her eyes – and was bound and had a gag in her mouth.

"Oh, no, no, no, no, no! You don't want to do it!" Sparrow tried to object when Salazar pulled a gag out of the girl's mouth. And then the pirate immediately covered his ears with both hands.

A second later, Armando understood why.

"Every time she opens her mouth, you want to go to church, you say?.." A few minutes later, when the girl paused her loud shouting of dirty Spanish curse words, asked Salazar.

"To confess only because I heard all of this," Sparrow winced, just in case keeping his hands not too far away from his ears.

The girl looked at the birdie in such a way that she might as well just say out loud: "Oh, I'll make a religious man out of you yet, Sparrow!"

...and Armando burned with desire at the thought of how the pirate would desperately and frenziedly moan "Oh God!.."

"She's lovely," Salazar smiled. "I like her."

"I knew that you'll take a liking to each other!" Sparrow beamed. And then he muttered in his beard something about laces, stockings, knickers, horologists and "who would have doubted".

"Well, go ahead and get to know each other. Talk, schmooze, get properly and improperly acquainted. I'll leave you two to it," Jack said. And then, going up to Armando, he murmured quietly: "It's better not to untie her... for now. At least for the first couple of days. Or weeks. Or years. Or ever. Just a friendly advice."

And then he tried to take his wings and to flit out of the cabin.

"No, mi pájaro," Salazar said, seizing Sparrow by the arm. "You're not flying anywhere."

And then he exchanged glances with the bound girl. She stared at Armando, closely and thoughtfully. And then... she *smirked*.

"Oh *bugger*," Sparrow said with a feeling as soon as he realized that he got himself in *so much* trouble.

Although, in all honesty, it took him some time to realize exactly in how *much* trouble he got himself in...

A little something for an epilogue

"Bugger!" cursed Jack.

"But I found you a Spanish lass!" outraged Jack.

"But I found you a Spanish macho!" seethed Jack.

"He's all yours, mi amor," Angelica said, kissing Armando and hiding in her corset the key from the shackles that she used to chain Jack slyly to the bed. "And I think I'd like to look at it,"

Angelica said, sitting herself comfortably in a chair. "It's definitely a sight to behold," Angelica said, looking at them with burning eyes.

"Shhh," said Salazar, putting a finger on the lips of the cursing (ingeniously, but quite innocently, because he couldn't bring himself to repeat after Angelica these dirty and nasty Spanish swear words) Sparrow. "Don't be afraid. You shouldn't be afraid. No te haré daño, mi pájaro."

"Bugger!" thought Jack.

So that's what you bring upon yourself when you bring two Spaniards together.

"Bugger!" thought Jack.

It seems that the one can expect no good from the ones believing in the holiness of the Spanish Inquisition.

"Bugger!" thought Jack.

And to think that he pushed the boat out for the laces, stockings and knickers for this mean Spanish lass! And where was the result, he would like to know?!

"Oh bugger," thought Jack.

...as soon as he realized exactly *where* that result was: lying chained to the bed. Because, well, there were *stockings*! And *laces*! And *knickers*! And!.. And how can a pirate resist? And how come that Spaniard can resist? Where was he even looking if not in the same direction?!

"Oh bugger," thought Jack.

...when he realized exactly *where* the Spaniard was looking. And *how* he was looking. And how he wasn't only *looking*.

"Oh. *Bugger*," thought Jack.

...when he realized that to *bugger* was *exactly* what that Spaniard had on mind.

"Oh *bugger*," thought Jack.

...and then he thought some more about it... And decided that maybe it's to the good that the Spaniard said "I will not hurt you" and not "I will not touch you".

"Oh *bugger*," thought Jack.

And unexpectedly for himself he completely stopped being afraid for his maiden's honour – after all, he really wasn't a maiden and he never had any honour *whatsoever*.

"Oh *bugger*," thought Jack...

...while hissing, arching and gasping.

"Oh *bugger*," still managed to think Jack...

...before he stopped thinking altogether and just started to moan "Oh God!.."

* * *

In the end it turned out that Jack was right: that Spanish macho had found a common language with that Spanish lass. After all, they really didn't even have to look for it: they were both *Spanish* and spoke *Spanish*! So they conspired in that Spanish language of theirs, and outrageously quickly. And conspired *against Jack*. Well, actually, they both had nothing *against Jack*, especially when there was literally *nothing*, not even a stitch of clothing, against them and Jack, but for some reason they conspired only *against Jack*, especially when there was *absolutely nothing* against them and Jack.

So the only joy in his life now was that at least none of them snored. Or talked in sleep. Or constantly tossed from side to side. Or repeatedly stole all of the pillows. Or ate something really crumbly in the bed. Or kicked in a dream.

...well, except for Jack, of course. Because just for them he was pointedly snoring, talking, kicking, tossing from side to side, appropriating every single pillow, constantly trying to push some unsuspecting Spanish off the cot to make more room for himself and in every possible way showing that it's more pleasant to keep bedbugs in bed than unsatisfied Sparrows. But these Spaniards were terribly cunning creatures, you see. At first they threaten you with gags and ropes, and not only threaten. And then they treacherously make Sparrows satisfied.

So he had to not to snore all that much, or talk, or kick, or toss from side to side, and almost don't

show that he plans to slip away from them somewhere.

And he even almost didn't plan to slip somewhere away from them. Only sometimes. On Tuesdays. And on Thursdays and Saturdays. And, well, on Sundays, too, every other time. And on Wednesdays – from time to time. And on Fridays – on the mood. But never on Mondays. Because Jack has long realized that he had better not to plan anything on Mondays. He already planned once on that treacherous day, found this Spanish macho such a good Spanish lass, and what do you think? Did these Spaniards sail away into the sunset like all the decent love-birds do? Well, yeah, that, of course, they actually did, but for some reason they decided that the sailing into the sunset will be done not in the direction conveniently away from Jack, no – and will include not just the two of them together.

“*Bugger*,” thought Jack.

“Pirate's life,” lamented Jack.

“The life of a pirate is full of hardships, miseries and sorrow,” complained Jack.

“Without any doubt,” agreed yet another hastily-married Turner, but for some reason Captain Sparrow wasn't able to hear any sympathy in his voice, nor was he able to see it in his eyes.

Jack really would have liked to say: “Ungrateful whelp!”. But the whelp was actually very much grateful. Because having found with his *future* wife (and now – the *lawful* wife of his) the Trident of Poseidon, he hadn't given it to anyone. Neither Barbossa, nor pirates. He hadn't used it for selfish purposes. And he hadn't used it immediately, as soon as he realized how to use it. Instead Henry and Carina returned to the *Pearl*. And, even though they hadn't known then whether Jack was still alive – they sailed after him. To help him out. To rescue him from Captain Salazar. And they even somehow managed to make Barbossa find Jack!..

...although exactly how Carina convinced Hector to do what she wants wasn't difficult to guess: she just had to say “I want it!” – and that had to be quite enough. After all, that old sea dog hadn't worked up the nerve to tell her that her surname wasn't Smith, but Barbossa. So he hadn't said anything, he kept his silence. Devil knows what he was so afraid of, considering that at her request it was he who led her down the aisle and married her off to Henry. But no matter – now it wasn't so important anymore. Now her surname also became Turner. Oh, these Bootstrap whelps and their spawn!..

...but how exactly Hector managed to find Jack, and so quickly, and in total darkness to boot, Jack had no idea, and, frankly, he was rather afraid to ask.

But, to be honest, it really wasn't important either. What was important is that Henry and Carina found him – albeit not without Barbossa's help. What was important is that they sailed after him. And what was really important is that Jack guessed that in time: as soon as he saw the breaking of the living dead's curse. In that moment Jack savvied that the Poseidon's Trident had broken all the curses. And then he thought that he might not have been abandoned there, after all. And, seeing that the dead had ceased to be invincible... Well, someone could have actually decided to come and fetch him. Who knows? Jack hasn't known. But he chose to check it out. And it turned out that he was right in his assumptions.

It turned out he was also right that Captain Salazar wouldn't leave him in peace. And that they need to find Angelica. And that they can't do without laces, stockings and knickers. And on the whole Jack was right about many things.

...especially about how quickly these two Spaniards will find a common language.

“*Bugger*,” Jack thought indignantly. But, in all fairness, not *too* indignantly.

After all, all this definitely had its silver lining. And besides, this time around if Angelica again will start to say that, of course, it would be a sin to complain about how they live in sin, but now it's not only Bootstrap, and not only Bootstrap's son, but also Bootstrap's *grandson* got married – then Sparrow will be able to reply: “Very well, I agree to be the best man on your wedding with Salazar!”.

...

Jack really wanted to say “*Bugger!*” when a couple of months later with no such thing as a word or two in warning – or at least some hint beforehand – a couple of his Spanish lovers dragged him

bodily to the church.

Jack really wanted to say “Bugger!” when he was not allowed to stand aside and not interfere with Angelica and Armando’s marriage ceremony.

Jack really wanted to say “Bugger!” when he stood at the two gun points – and not just anywhere, no: at the *altar*. And he was the only one in the whole church standing there in a damned white dress.

Jack really wanted to say “Bugger!” when the priest, surrounded by Salazar’s sailors with arms at the ready, confidently uttered with almost no trembling voice that no, nothing bothers him, to God this union is completely acceptable, of course they can be married, he sees no obstacles to it. And he even added something or other about the holiness and the triplicity of the holy trinity and that, in fact, God surely had to love all about Three in One.

Jack really wanted to say “Bugger!” when they unequivocally explained to him that today was either his wedding or his funeral. And although the pirate was almost absolutely sure that the Spaniards were bluffing about the funeral, but the grave suspiciously (and alarmingly conveniently) was already dug in the cemetery nearby and that fairly alarmed him – him and the priest, too, obviously. So that surely got Jack thinking. That and the fact that Angelica, Jack remembered vividly, already shot at him a few times...

So Jack really wanted to say “Bugger!”... until suddenly he realized that he was in church, swearing there is improper. That and the fact that he is very conveniently already...

“Yeah! That’s it! I’m already married!” Jack rejoiced. “To the Pig Kelly’s sister, Beatrice.”

Angelica looked at him intently... and fingered the gun trigger. “It wasn’t my decision!” said Jack hastily. “So it’s a great pity that I had to disappoint everyone, but you’ll really have to do without me somehow. I can’t get married anymore. The priest will confirm this.”

The priest turned pale. And he definitely was in no hurry to confirm anything.

“You can,” Captain Salazar said levelly. “Go on, Padre, we’ve already taken care of this.”

“But...” Jack looked around, looked at the whole mess of trouble that he was dragged in... And, outraged, he loudly exclaimed: “I’m already married!”

“You’re already a widower,” Captain Salazar corrected him calmly.

...and Jack suddenly remembered with horror that he told that terrible story about the forced wedding... Let’s think about it... His uncle Jack – for sure. Barbossa’s monkey – certainly. Some jailer in Panama – yeah, that definitely happened. And... Gibbs. And that was pretty much the same as to tell *everyone* at once.

...and Jack suddenly remembered with horror that the *Silent Mary* had recently sailed on business somewhere away. For a short while – Jack had learned about it only after the Spaniard with his crew and the ship already came back. If he got wind of it right away – no doubt he would have slipped away from these crazy Spanish people and wouldn’t have spent all that time on the beach with a huge barrel of rum and Angelica in simply stunning lacy stockings and knickers.

...and Jack suddenly remembered with horror... all those stories that once upon a time, a decade or two ago, was told among pirates about the Spaniard known as El Matador del Mar.

Armando looked at him intently. Smiled at him with that terrible smile of the Butcher of the Sea.

And then he nodded to the priest and said:

“Go on, Padre. *Go on.*”

...

Thus Jack really, really wanted to say: “Bugger!”. But he hadn’t said it, no: instead he decided that it didn’t matter that he was in the church, nor did it matter what was and wasn’t proper to say there – and repeated all those terrible and dirty Spanish curses and swear words that *never before* he managed to will himself into repeating after Angelica.

Because “Bugger!” was too good a word that could do no justice to all this disaster.

So now he could only hope that Hector will save him from this shameful wedding as well. After all, he is his very, very best friend. Well, he surely couldn’t just leave Jack alone in so much trouble? He just *couldn’t*, right?..

Notes:

You can hear the song that Murka used as a music epigraph for this story (the song “Tzarevna” by Dmitry Koldun), for example, here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTC_EfKgyOM

“No te haré daño” from Spanish to English can be translated as “I will not hurt you” or “I will not harm you”, it’s a promise not to hurt someone.

According to information that Murka found on the Internet, in the 17th century Spanish etiquette prescribed that the noble women and unmarried girls should be escorted on the street by a servant, a duenna or a man from the family. An unmarried girl must have a duenna. The ladies could not laugh out loud and idly look out the windows. Also among the nobles it was customary never to hurry, to run for the lady was considered a bad tone, and gesticulation should have been restrained. Duenna is an older woman acting as a governess and companion in charge of girls, especially in a Spanish family; a chaperone who accompanies girl everywhere and makes sure that a girl behaves properly. Spanish queens also had duennas.

“Muchacha bonita” translates from Spanish as “beautiful”, “beautiful girl”.

“No te haré daño, mi pájaro” translates from Spanish as “I will not hurt you, my birdie”.

“Ya te encontré” in Spanish means “and I found you”, “I already found you”.

“Bonita señorita” translates from Spanish as “beautiful girl”.

“El Matador del Mar” translates from Spanish as “The Butcher of the Sea”.

Amigo – in Spanish means “friend”, “buddy”, “mate”.

A gun port is an opening in the side of the hull of a ship, above the waterline, which allows the muzzle of artillery pieces mounted on the gun deck to fire outside. The origin of this technology is not precisely known, but can be traced back to the late 15th century, with the appearance of artillery in naval warfare. Ships featuring gun ports were said to be pierced, since the ports were cut through the hull after the construction. The power of a cannon depends of its calibre and its range, which in turn impact its weight. The first artillery pieces used in naval combat, traced back to 1304, were light enough to be mounted on the forecastle, in line with the tactics of the time which favoured attacks facing the bow the enemy. However, the improvements of the guns from the mid-14th century dictated an increase in weight, forcing ships to mount them low on the hull for stability; piercing gun ports had therefore grown into a common practice by 1501. Despite evidences, some historians claim the invention was probably simultaneous in Portugal, Spain, England, France and Holland. It was made possible by the increased size of ship hulls, which allowed piercing ports high enough that they would not take in seawater; nevertheless, the ports had to close with lids in heavy seas, and making them watertight was a technical challenge at the time.

The term gun deck used to refer to a deck aboard a ship that was primarily used for the mounting of cannon to be fired in broadsides. The term is generally applied to decks enclosed under a roof; smaller and unrated vessels carried their guns on the upper deck, forecastle and quarterdeck, and these were not described as gun decks.

“No” in Spanish means same as “no” in English.

Mi pájaro – translates from Spanish as “my birdie”.

On the Internet Murka found information that “pájaro”, by one of the definitions, is translated as “bird”, is used as a common name which refers to any flying bird, especially if it’s small, and if more correctly, it refers to a group of passerines that includes sparrows. In addition, according to some sources, in the taboo vocabulary “pájaro” also means “hard on”.

Mi amor – translates from Spanish as “my love”.

Stockings are close-fitting, variously elastic garments covering the leg from the foot up to the knee or possibly part or all of the thigh. Stockings vary in color, design, and transparency. In the past they were used by both women and men. Before the 1590s, stockings were made of woven cloth.

The first knitting machines were for making stockings. The stockings themselves were made of cotton, linen, wool or silk. During the reign of Louis XIV were popular light blue and red stockings. Marquise de Pompadour, commonly known as Madame de Pompadour, had very fashionable stockings made of exclusive lace the cost of which was approaching the annual income of the average nobleman. In the 16th century thin, expensive handmade stockings again came into fashion in Spain. English King Henry VIII once received from Spain one pair of these stockings as an expensive gift.

Penélope Cruz (Angelica Teach in *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*) is married to Spanish actor Javier Bardem (Captain Salazar in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*). Cruz began dating Bardem in 2007 and they married in early July 2010 in a private ceremony at a friend's home in the Bahamas. They have a son Leonardo born in 2011 in Los Angeles, and a daughter Luna born in 2013.

At the premiere of *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* in Moscow, Penélope Cruz (Angelica Teach) and Johnny Depp (the one and only Captain Jack Sparrow) gave a very interesting interview that you can read in Russian here:

https://russia.tv/article/show/article_id/10261/ Some parts of that interview you can see in English, for example, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8m6OJugj-Y>

A few facts from this interview that inspired Murka and references to which can be found in this fanfic:

In that interview Johnny Depp was asked about the rumors that Penélope taught him Spanish, interviewer was interested in how was it going. Johnny Depp replied that she tried to teach him the raunchiest Spanish that he's ever been told. It's so foul that he couldn't bring himself to repeat it, he had to go to church to confess and get cleansed only because he heard that nasty, nasty words. And if he said them, he'll have to go to a psychiatrist – this will be a shock to him.

Also Penélope Cruz was asked why her husband Javier Bardem came to Moscow with them for the premiere of *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*, is it because he was afraid to leave here and Johnny Depp alone? Both Penélope and Johnny laughed really hard at that and Penélope Cruz replied: "He loves, he *loves* spending time with Johnny Depp, that's why he's here". Immediately after that Johnny Depp said: "I've actually kissed them both", and Penélope Cruz confirmed that for the truth that it was.

By the way, Johnny Depp said "I have been friends with Javier for the longest time. I have kissed him on the mouth and even his wife," in this interview, too:

https://m.hindustantimes.com/hollywood/i-have-kissed-javier-bardem-and-his-wife-penelop-cruz-says-johnny-depp-on-the-mouth/story-1VZxg9I5bSPgeGs6s7sNdJ_amp.html

Also as part of promotion of the *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales* Johnny Depp appeared on episode of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, and when he was asked a provocative question "Out of all your costars, who's the best kisser?", Johnny quickly replied that it was Javier Bardem, who played the role of Captain Salazar. There is a good picture on the Internet about it:

<https://pp.userapi.com/c837721/v837721813/3f453/ZwdM0uOUkqg.jpg>

Works inspired by this ~~one~~ [Pajarito](#) by [IntrovertWithCaffeine](#)

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